

# How to Create Your Home Inventory

Losing a home in a disaster is one of the most devastating experiences a person can have. So in addition to buying enough insurance and taking steps to make your home more damage-resistant, there is one simple thing you can do to protect yourself and your family: Create a **home inventory**. Why?

Because preparing an inventory after a total loss for insurance or tax purposes is often the most painful and time-consuming part of recovery. And, especially after a traumatic loss, it's impossible to remember everything you had, so most people never collect their full insurance benefits. This flash drive tool will help you protect your belongings and assets by creating a record that can be safely stored and accessible to you in the event of a loss.

Our easy-to-use **UP Home Inventory**\* will help you list the contents of every room in your house. We created our inventory tool from the most comprehensive lists that past disaster survivors created and used to get paid in full on their insurance claims. Benefit from lessons that others learned the hard way. Create your inventory today.

\*You will need the Microsoft Excel program to use the UP Home Inventory spreadsheet. If you do not have this program on your computer, you can download a free trial or buy it at <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel/default.aspx>.

This **UP Home Inventory** flash drive can be password protected. This means you can safely use it to store serial numbers for electronics, and even account numbers and passwords (Example: bank accounts, mutual funds, frequent flyer numbers, etc). The "Frequently Asked Questions" tab in the inventory teaches you how.

## INSTRUCTIONS

There are two ways to fill out the **UP Home Inventory**. You can fill in the contents of the spreadsheet on your computer and save it on this flash drive, or you can print out the individual sheets and complete it by hand. Either way, you will be making the right start toward disaster preparedness and "Insurance Assurance".

The **UP Home Inventory** includes common items that are found in most homes, but you can add any additional items or change the items listed to personalize your inventory. **Remember that insurance fraud is a felony**, so be sure to include only items you actually own. While we encourage you to complete every column, if you only have limited time, complete the description, quantity and age of each item, and add cost information in later.

Don't worry about filling in the "% value" column unless you are using the inventory to file an actual insurance claim. This column describes the current value of the item. It is helpful to know if your insurance policy pays **Actual Cash Value (ACV)** or **Replacement Cost (RC)** for personal property items. Most policies these days are RC and are supposed to cover the cost of replacing an item (present day value), but if you have an ACV on contents policy, you will need to estimate current values.

To see an example of a completed inventory created by a person who lost a home in a wildfire and had to document everything for insurance, open the **Sample Inventory** file on this flash drive.

### FLASH DRIVE TIPS:

- Use your **UP Home Inventory** flash drive to store scanned copies of important documents. If you don't have equipment to do this, email [info@uphelp.org](mailto:info@uphelp.org) to find out if UP will be offering an "Insurance Assurance: Does Your Safety Net Have Holes?" workshop in your area. At these workshops, a UP representative will help scan your insurance documents onto the flash drive. For more information or to schedule a workshop in your community, email [info@uphelp.org](mailto:info@uphelp.org) or call (415) 393-9990.
- Update your inventory over time. Add new items as you acquire new items, remove items you no longer have. Scan receipts for big ticket items onto flashdrive.
- Photograph the inside and outside of your home and upload the images onto this flash drive.
- Store your inventory in a secure place away from your home, such as your office, or a safe deposit box. Or, email your inventory to a trusted friend and ask them to save it for you. This way, if you ever need the information for insurance or tax purposes, it will be easy to access.

Lastly, remember that doing at least *something* to prepare is always better than doing nothing at all. For more information on disaster preparedness and mitigation tips to make your home more damage resistant, visit [http://www.uphelp.org/prepare\\_protect.html](http://www.uphelp.org/prepare_protect.html). If you have any questions about the **UP Home Inventory**, contact United Policyholders at [info@uphelp.org](mailto:info@uphelp.org) or visit our website at <http://www.uphelp.org>.

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*United Policyholders is a national 501(c) (3) non-profit organization serving insurance consumers since 1991. UP helps solve insurance problems and advocates for fairness in insurance transactions. The organization is funded by foundation grants and donations. Our work is divided into 3 program areas: Roadmap to Recovery™, Roadmap to Preparedness, and Advocacy and Action. We offer free tips, information and resources in print and online at <http://www.uphelp.org>.*

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